The Desert Whispers
from Johnson Valley

VOL. 2, NO. 6 THE MOJAVE DESERT, CALIFORNIA FEBRUARY 22, 1969

SEARCH AND RESCUE MEET

Visitors are welcome at the next meeting of the Johnson Valley Search and Rescue group, scheduled for 6 p.m., March 8, at Golda Gunning's.

The local group has been making efforts to obtain assistance from government agencies. Civil Defense can not provide assistance unless there is an existing air raid shelter which has been built to specifications, which CD could then equip, according to an answer in response to a query. And the sheriff's department can not provide material items, but only a deputy when needed.

In the meantime, members and interested individuals continue to donate articles to be used in emergencies. Among the recent donations are three highway reflectors and a battery-operated flare from Neville Bell. All members are scheduled to provide rolled bandages, with Bea Roush presenting her contribution at the February meeting.

Visitors are under no obligation to join, but might be interested in meeting the members and getting acquainted.

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NO PHONES YET - BUT DON'T GIVE UP

The Public Utilities Commission said "no" to the last request for telephones in Johnson Valley, but residents and General Telephone have not given up.

Mrs. Flossie Estes, chairman of the phone committee for the JVIA, received word that General Telephone is preparing a new application.

A group of 16 residents also met at the home of Elmer Jacobs to discuss further pursuit of the matter. Jake has applications for phones at his house, and invites residents to stop in and fill out a form. He also has a map of applicants recorded to date.

Donald Henley, of the Department of Communications and Disaster for the county, attended the meeting to provide information.

Attending in addition to Henley and Mr. and Mrs. Jacobs were Clarence Green, Nancy Dumond, Bruce Hooker, Beatrice Roush, Mrs. Estes, Louis and Katherine Armelino, Virginia Baumgard, L.W. Jones, Dan Jarvis, Alex Chernoff, Walter Remy and Jim Kirkendall.

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WHISPERS AND SHOUTS

Sylvia, Jerry and Jess Betts up to say hi to their desert friends.****** Bea Roush and Goldie Hopper visiting their sister, Hazel Reed, and joined by Virginia Baumgard.**********

JVIA MEET COMING UP

The Johnson Valley Improvement Association will meet at 7:30 p.m., March 1 in the Community Hall on Larrea Road.

Pie and coffee for 25 cents will be served at 6 p.m. Everyone is welcome to the social hour preceding the meeting.

Elmer Jacobs was named chairman of the nominating committee by President Alex Chernoff at the February meeting. The committee will present a slate of officers at the April session, when nominations will be accepted from the floor, and the election will be held.

Several residents of the Valley have been maintaining roads, it was announced. Approval was given to Gus Valentine to collect donations from property owners interested in continuing the road work.

The membership approved installation of a mercury light at the association building, payment of $4.40 a month to be made from association funds.

Payment of all bills was approved, putting the association in the black. Further fund raisings can be directed to construction of a kitchen.

The 1969 association dues are now payable, the president reminded members.

Approval of transfer of remaining funds from the former proposed county water association, to the JVIA, was given. Only four property owners asked for a refund of the remaining portion of their donations of $1 an acre.

Approximately $800 was spent in surveys, reports and mailings, with almost $600 remaining in the fund. About 350 property owners contributed to the study.

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CORRECTION

The Bighorn Water Association can not accept applications and the $25 fee at this time, as we stated last month. The Association has made application to the Farm and Home Administration office in Riverside for a loan. There are now 934 benefit users signed up, according to the directors of the water association.

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THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE JOHNSON VALLEY IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION MEETS AT 2 p.m. March 1 in the Community Hall.

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MORE WHISPERS

Visiting the Coutants during the holidays were Dave Lackie, Bill Chisholm, Mike Waite, and Red and Myrt Waite, all from Sierra Madre. * * * * * * * * * *

KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS "Can Do" Chernoff

Alex Chernoff believes in "Can Do," the motto of his alma mater, the U. S. Navy Seabees, and applies it to his public and private life.

Alex has been president of the Johnson Valley Improvement Association for the past three years, carrying on the work of the founders in promoting orderly growth in Johnson Valley. He sees a promising future for the Valley, and hopes that following generations will look favorably on the foundations laid by the "early settlers."

Chernoff received his schooling in California, in Manteeka and Marysville. In 1929 he and his brother, Victor, started in business in San Jose with a 20-stool restaurant, which they operated until 1933, when Alex joined the Merchant Marine and traveled on the major lines for four years. While firing boilers, he learned Russian from a fellow worker to occupy his spare time.

In 1938, he decided it was time to get his land legs going, and he and his wife, Anna, operated a restaurant in San Francisco for a year.

Alex joined the Naval Reserves in 1934, which provided him with 4½ years of active duty in WWII. He received amphibious training at Port Hueneme where he was in charge of small boat repairs; served at several Pacific coast bases, and on out in the Pacific.

In 1956 he joined the CB's, the Navy Construction Battalion, in which he has great pride. Much of the big road and dam construction now going on owes its advancement to the pioneering of the Seabees when roads and airfields had to be constructed quickly, he points out.

Alex is still a builder chief in the Seabees, serving as acting platoon officer, construction project chief and chief evaluator of instructors. He spends at least one weekend a month on CB projects.

In 1946 he started his own building business, and in June of 1962, he and Anna moved to Johnson Valley. Anna is of German Austrian descent. Her father was also in the construction business, and Anna often traveled around Europe with him, and learned to speak five languages in her travels. Anna had two sons of a previous marriage. Kenneth Sentner was a bomber pilot in WWII, and later died of a heart attack. Leonard lives in Downey and is sales representative for a textile firm.

Alex is a member of the American Legion, and was adjutant commander of the Seaside Post in 1955-56, a post he helped organize. He helped to incorporate Seaside, and to raise relief supplies for flooded Marysville. He is a deputy registrar of voters for Johnson Valley.

Chernoff is eternally optimistic, with many adages to prove his point. One of his favorites is "The difficult we do immediately. The impossible takes a little longer." - M.C.

THE OLD HORNED TOAD

POST MORTEM - Down here under our rock we too are in mourning for the murder of the Saturday Evening Post. Thirty-five years ago the Post stood for integrity, dependability, honesty and virtue in our family. My father would look around the living room at the visiting lanky, pale dishwater blond freeloaders and wail plaintively, "Why don't you date someone like the Saturday Evening Post boy?"

The SEP boy was chubby, red-cheeked, clean and industrious, making his rounds to sell the SEP for a nickel, door-to-door. The Post and the Boy were synonymous - virtue!

Fiction in the old Post is often charged with being trite and repetitious, but it could never compare with the repetition of the two subjects now in some magazines.

The editors trying to shock us with four letter words do not realize that some of us little old horned toads in tennis shoes became accustomed to the trite phrases and the same old sales talk from our lanky pals many years ago. But it was balanced by some darn good fiction in the Saturday Evening Post.

THRILLING MOMENT - When you dump a three-pound can of coffee in one fell swoop into a two-pound canister that is a little wider than the coffee can.

Many renewals to the Desert Whispers, accompanied by notes of encouragement, comments and constructive criticism. Good suggestions await printing - for when we get around to that again. Many thanks to you all. The Old Horned Toad is back in school again at Pasadena City College, trying to learn the mechanics of putting a paper together. Hope it pays off in a better paper for our readers.

According to George Lowe in the Los Angeles Times, Old Woman Springs got its name from the fact that the Indians left their women and children there while they hunted in the mountains.

NOMINATED FOR BRAVERY - It's raining, and in the park across the street a man is walking with a little umbrella apparently borrowed from his daughter. It's red and white striped and is no bigger than his hat. Takes guts!

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NATURE NOTES

There are about 700 species of annuals in the Southwest Deserts, and according to the rain that has fallen in the past month, everyone of them should bloom this spring. But nature has created a system that is more complex than "April showers bring Mayflowers," according to information gleaned from "Southwest Desert Wonderland," by Norman Hammond Wakeman, and Life's "The Desert."

Seeds are scattered by wind and may lie dormant for years waiting for rain; but not just any amount of rain will do. Scientists report the seed is surrounded by a water-soluble chemical, a germinator inhibitor, that must be washed away before the seed will sprout. The wetness of the soil does not count, but how much rain washes the inhibitor down into the soil. This is to prevent premature sprouting and assure that the plant will have enough moisture to see it through its life span. Nature goes even further by anticipating dry conditions to follow, and desert annuals come into bloom faster than any other plants on earth, forming seeds quickly, and then dying. These are the ephemeral annuals, Professor Wakeman writes.

Even then not all seeds germinate. Some are retained in a "seed bank," according to Life. And apparently there is a thermostat somewhere, for winter annuals germinate only in winter rains, and summer plants wait for warmer rains.

On the desert it is usually too much or too little rain. General widespread desert rain is almost unknown. In some places rain may evaporate on the way down to earth. There are few gentle rains on the desert. It usually comes in downpours and cloudbursts, causing flash floods and wash-outs. A flash flood in Mojave once carried a train more than a mile before burying it with sediment. One side of a valley will be dry while it storms on the other side, and even one side of a trail will be dry while it rains on the other side. (We watched it rain on the south side of our cabin while it remained dry on the north side.)

But the system works. Bees, moths, butterflies and beetles hatch at the right time to pollinate the flowers; animals are born to live off the plants and seeds, and life goes on the desert - a complex pyramid of interdependency that works, and provides us all with gorgeous, brilliant carpets of color - a joy to behold.

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WORTH REPEATING - Re Prop. 1-A

by Art and Eleanor Callender

Proposition 1A passed on the November ballot in California, gives relief to the taxpayer. Briefly:

1) Provides a homeowner's property tax exemption of $750 of assessed valuation. Does not apply to property under construction, to rented or vacant property, to vacation or secondary homes, nor to property on which the owner receives a veteran's exemption of tax assistance.

2) Grants an increase in the California standard income tax deduction from $500 to $1,000 for single persons; and from $1,000 to $2,000 for married couples. This is designed to give relief to taxpayers who, as tenants, do not itemize deductions such as mortgage interest and real property taxes.

3) Provides an exemption from property tax of the personal effects and household furnishings of every householder.

"Householder" means any person owning, purchasing or renting real property which he uses regularly as a residence.

"Personal effects and household furnishings" does not include boats, aircraft, vehicles, or property held or used in connection with a trade, profession or business.

(continued next col.)

4) Gives a 15 per cent exemption of the assessed value of business inventories.

In addition, homeowners qualifying under (1) above are entitled to a $70 cash refund on 1968 property taxes.

On or before March 1, 1969, the assessor of each county will make available forms on which to claim the 1968 property tax relief payment, and the 1969 property tax exemption. The assessor may make forms available by (1) mailing preheaded forms and providing blank forms at the assessor's office; (2) distributing supplies of blank forms to places in the county to which residents have easy access, or (3) a combination of methods.

The claim forms MUST be filed with the assessor on or before April 15, 1969.

DESERT EARS CLUB DOINGS

The public is invited to a dime-a-dip sponsored by the Desert Ears CB Club, from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. on March 22, in the Landers Association building on Reche Road, Landers.

Eva Hibbard is chairman.

Transportation from two flying fields to the hall will be provided for those who wish to fly in. The strips are the Valley Vista in Johnson Valley, and a strip in Landers adjacent to the Moose Hall. Radio communications will be provided at each air field. There is adequate parking at the Association Hall.

President Bob Forster announces that 1969 dues are now payable. There are 101 club members.

At the February meeting and pot luck, members voted to participate in the Landers Annual Fund Festival this year. The articles of incorporation were also read.

The first reading of the by-laws is scheduled for the regular meeting on March 9, at noon in Landers.

The president appointed to the Relief Committee Harold Hawley, Dan Hibbard and the president.

The board of directors will meet at 8 p.m., Feb. 28, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Cecil McGee, on Burns Road in Landers.

Door prizes were won at the February meeting by Ruby Piner, Ann Hawley and Marion Page. A knick-knack auction was conducted by McGee, and is scheduled following each regular business meeting.

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SHOUTS AND WHISPERS

Burt Campbell says many thanks to those who sent him cards and messages of encouragement while he was recuperating from a traffic accident. It's been a long siege for Burt, but he apparently is now on the mend.

Beatrice Van Buren is at home recovering from surgery. Best wishes, Bea.

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NEIGHBORHOOD HAPPENINGS

by Aileen De Victoria

Virgil and Myrna Drorbaugh, accompanied by his brother Dewey and wife, Florence, have returned from an enjoyable trip to Mexico. The weather was perfect and the fishing great, they reported.

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Many happy returns to Golda Gunning, Bernice Burkett, Kathy Peterson, and Zella Piacentini, February birthday gals. Also to Patsy Dumond and Coot Coutant who are observing their birthdays with a small gathering at Coot's home on Saturday. * * * *

We're happy to report that Ancel Cole is back home and feeling better everyday, and that Burt Campbell is feeling his old chipper self again. * * * * *

Want a cute German Shepherd-Collie pup? See Jody De Victoria for an adorable pet.

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Joe Haklatich and John Biss, known as Doc and J.J., and their families, entertained at the Chisel Inn Friday and Saturday, with live music. It's Doc and J.J.'s way of relaxing during the weekend. * * * *

Earl and Bea Roush, and Goldie Hopper enjoyed a surprise visit from an old friend, Lloyd Stoner, from East Liverpool, Ohio. * * * *

There are some "Knuckleheads" in Johnson Valley. The group of women who play pool at the Chisel Inn on Thursday have organized a card club meeting on Mondays at members' homes. Next session is at 1 p.m. Feb. 24, at the Drorbaugh home. Women are welcome. May Hartwell was the first hostess.

Officers have been nominated and include Marie Stanley for president; May Hartwell for treasurer; Aileen De Victoria, publicity.

Members include nominees and Ruby Piner, Golda Gunning, Louise Bell, Nancy Dumond, Bea Roush, Goldie Hopper, Edna Hodges, Myrna Drorbaugh, Mildred Jacobs, Agnes Valentine and Virginia Baumgard.

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Johnson Valley received a steady rain which should bring beautiful flowers about Easter.

-- A. DeV.

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Dues $2.50 per person
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Yucca Valley, Cal. 92284

CHURCH SERVICES

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Rev. Patrick J. Scanlan, Pastor

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